



Honorable Earl F. Weener, PhD., Member of the National Transportation Safety Board

Earl F. Weener, Ph.D. took the oath of office as the 41st Member of the National Transportation Safety Board on June 30, 2010. He brings to the Board his experience as an industry executive, long-time safety advocate, flight instructor, pilot, boat captain and aerospace engineer. He is a tireless safety advocate who works to promote collaborative efforts between government and industry believing that the partnership approach is often more effective, less burdensome and quicker than a regulatory solution. During his 24 years with Boeing, he rose from engineer, integrally involved with cutting-edge commercial cockpit design, to executive. In D.C., he managed Boeing's Engineering and Technical Government Affairs. Returning to headquarters in Seattle, he served as Chief Engineer of Airworthiness, Reliability Maintainability and Safety and then Chief of Systems Engineering. His responsibilities included the management of a staff of engineers and technical experts numbering more than 450 employees. After leaving Boeing, he served as Foundation Fellow for the Flight Safety Foundation. Within this role, he organized and executed multiple national and international collaborative government and industry programs. For his work, he was recognized with a 2005 Honeywell Bendix Trophy for Aviation Safety and was appointed to serve on the Flight Safety Foundation's Icarus Committee and its Board of Governors. As a Board Member, Dr. Weener has focused on safety improvements in business and general aviation for both fixed wing aircraft and helicopters. He represents the Board at meetings of the General Aviation Joint Steering Committee and the Commercial Aviation Safety Team, groups of industry, government, safety and other stakeholders working together to develop cooperative solutions to safety concerns. He also worked with commercial motor vehicle groups, cruise lines, and railroads to provide safety messaging to their members. He has represented the Board on the scene of major accident investigations, including the Metro North Railroad commuter train derailments in Connecticut and New York, 2013, and the collision between a duck boat and motorcoach carrying a group of exchange students in Seattle, Washington, 2015. He has participated in numerous Board meetings, often adding his own concurring or dissenting statements to Board opinions. In addition to his education and career, Dr. Weener has first-hand transportation experience. He holds licenses as a flight instructor and charter pilot. He keeps his own plane, a Beechcraft Bonanza, and flies whenever possible. He is also a boating enthusiast. In 2000, he received his United States Coast Guard Master's License. After commissioning a specially designed steel hull trawler, he lived aboard for several years. His travels included the East Coast Intracoastal Waterway, the Great Lakes, the waterways from Chicago to Mobile, Alabama, the West Coast, as well as the inside passage to Alaska. As a young man, he held a commercial driving privilege and drove a delivery truck. Dr. Weener, a Michigan native, worked as flight instructor to put himself through college and graduate school, while attaining scholastic honors including membership in Tau Beta Pi, a National Engineering Honor Society, and Sigma Gamma Tau, a National Aerospace Engineering Honor Society. He earned his Bachelor's, Master's, and Doctorate degrees from the University of Michigan. He and his wife Linda currently reside in Northern Virginia.



Patty Wagstaff – Patty Wagstaff Aviation Safety, General Manager

Patty Wagstaff is an American aerobatic national champion aviator. She qualified for the US Aerobatic Team from 1985 until 1996 and was the top US medal winner, winning gold, silver, and bronze medals in international competitions for several years. She earned the Rolly Cole Memorial Award in 1987 for her contributions to aerobatic sports, and in 1991, she won her first of three US National Aerobatic Championships, becoming the first woman to win that competition. She continues working in the aviation field as an airshow pilot, stunt pilot for films, consultant, and flight instructor of upset recovery profiles. She is an emeritus board member of the Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum and was on the Presidential Advisory Committee to the Centennial of Flight Commission. She flies airshows across North America in a variety of airplanes,

including an Extra 300S, a T-6 Texan, and a P-51 Mustang. In addition to airshows, she has flown OV-10 Broncos as a seasonal aerial firefighter in California. She is an instrument-rated pilot and has owned a Beechcraft Baron and a Cirrus SR22. She currently flies a Beechcraft Bonanza.



Sean Elliott – EAA, Vice President of Advocacy and Safety

Sean Elliott joined the EAA staff in April 1996, serving for 4 years as the executive director and president for EAA's affiliate, the National Association of Flight Instructors, before taking over the EAA's Aircraft Operations and Air Tours in 2000. As the head of EAA Aircraft Operations, he is responsible for developing and implementing pilot training and standardization as well as overseeing three national tours each year. He handles the significant challenges of maintaining a vintage fleet of aircraft with little to no factory support. He has been vice president of advocacy and safety since December 2010, where he is part of the EAA senior leadership team and manages the EAA's government affairs offices at both EAA headquarters and in Washington, DC. He is responsible for reviewing and analyzing government policy and regulation on the federal, state, and local levels that affects recreational aviation, as well as advocating for EAA members and private individuals who build and fly aircraft for recreation. He is a pilot and instructor in most of the EAA's vintage and experimental fleet and is qualified in and has flown many different types of vintage aircraft. He holds an ATP Certificate and is an FAA-designated pilot examiner with over 8,300 hours of pilot-in-command time and over 5,500 hours of dual instruction time. He holds CFI, CFII, CFMEI, Gold Seal, AGI, and IGI certificates.



Richard McSpadden, AOPA Air Safety Institute, Executive Director

Richard McSpadden is a commercial pilot and CFI with over 4,500 hours in 30 years of flying a variety of civilian and military aircraft. He has extensive experience in aviation safety, including ground, flight, and special event operations. Richard currently owns a 1955 Piper Super Cub and flies a family Navion. He previously owned a Cherokee 140 aircraft that he used to instruct his son to a successful completion of his private pilot certificate. Prior to joining the Air Safety Institute, Richard had a successful career in the Information Technology industry leading large, geographically dispersed operations providing business-critical information technology services. Prior to joining the private sector, Richard closed his 20-year Air Force career as the Commander and Flight Leader of the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds flight demonstration team where he headed the U.S. Air Force's flagship organization and led over 100 demonstrations in the #1 aircraft.



Jim Higgins, PhD, Department Chair & Associate Professor, University of North Dakota

Jim Higgins is department chair and associate professor at the John D. Odegard School of Aerospace Sciences at the University of North Dakota, where he graduated with a Master of Science. In addition to teaching, he has an extensive career in the aviation industry, including as a Line Check Airman, Master Executive Council Chairman, and Captain with American Eagle Airlines; First Officer with Air Cargor Carriers; and Corporate Pilot with Mattracks. He has conducted extensive research and has accreditations in Flight Data Monitoring, Safety Management Systems, CGAR, 2010-Present, and Airport Traumatic Events.

Corey Stephens – FAA, Accident Investigation and Prevention Operations Research Analyst

Corey Stephens is an operations research analyst with the FAA's Office of Accident Investigation and Prevention. Prior to joining the FAA, he was a senior staff engineer with the Accident Investigation Section of the Air Line Pilots Association's (ALPA's) Engineering and Air Safety Department. He has served as an FAA and industry representative to the Commercial Aviation Safety Team (CAST) – Joint Implementation Monitoring Data Analysis Team. He also works with the Aviation Safety Information Analysis and Sharing programs, serves as government co-chair on the GA Joint Steering Committee (GAJSC) Safety Analysis Team, and serves on the GA Issues Analysis Team. He has taught in ALPA's Basic Accident and Advanced Accident investigation courses and has been involved in International Society of Air Safety Investigators for several years. He has also served for several years as the co-chair of the CAST/ICAO Common Taxonomy Team, was co-chair of the CAST Wrong Runway Departure Working Group, and served on many CAST analysis and implementation teams in addition to the GAJSC Loss of Control working groups. He earned a BS in aviation and an MS in aviation safety from the University of Central Missouri, as well as an MS in space studies from the University of North Dakota. He is a GA pilot and serves as the Assistant Director of Safety for the West Virginia wing of the Civil Air Patrol.

